



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
CITY OF CHICAGO

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 15, 2019

CONTACT:

Mayor's Press Office

312.744.3334

press@cityofchicago.org

MAYOR EMANUEL ANNOUNCES CHICAGO HITS HISTORIC LOW TEEN BIRTHRATE

New Data Show Chicago African American Teens Have Achieved the Steepest Decline

Mayor Rahm Emanuel and the Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) today announced teen births have reached a new historic low in Chicago. In 2016, the most recent year for which data are available, there were 24.6 births per 1,000 females aged 15-19.

This is a 10.5 percent decline when compared to a year earlier and a 47 percent decline since 2011 when Mayor Emanuel first took office.

"Chicago has made a concerted, collaborative effort to help young people plan for the future, make responsible choices and lead successful lives," said Mayor Emanuel. "A record low number of teen births means more Chicago teens can focus on their educations, work towards their goals and create better futures for themselves."

Declines have been seen across every ethnic group, with the greatest declines among Chicago's African American teens, who historically faced the greatest disparities. Teen birth rates among African American teens have been cut in half in just five years, from 64.2 in 2011 to 32.0 in 2016. Even with this progress, disparities persist. African American and Latina teens are more than five times as likely to experience a birth than white teens. Though Chicago's teen birth rate is higher than the national average, that gap is also closing as Chicago has experienced a nearly 70 percent decline since 2000, compared to just a 57 percent decline nationwide.

"Today's news isn't just about teen births, it's about teen health overall. We know that when an individual waits to become a parent, both their health and the health of their children improve," said CDPH Commissioner Julie Morita, M.D."

Research has consistently shown that teen birth and unintended pregnancies increase the chance of low birth weight and infant mortality. Becoming a parent early in life is associated with lower educational attainment and income. Studies have found that non-teen parents are more likely to earn high school diplomas and college degrees.

Under Mayor Emanuel's leadership, CDPH has launched a comprehensive effort to further reduce the teen birth rate and promote equity for youth sexual and reproductive health in Chicago. That effort, incorporated into Healthy Chicago 2.0, the city's public health plan, includes a number of evidence-based strategies to ensure every teenager has access to information and resources.

CDPH's Chicago Healthy Adolescents and Teens (CHAT) program offers education on birth control, information to encourage making informed sexual choices and healthy relationships in select CPS high schools, in addition to testing and treatment for sexually transmitted infections. Since March 2015, CHAT has provided sexual health education to more than 45,000 youth and screened more than 23,000 youth in high schools, colleges and community based organizations throughout the city. In 2015, CDPH was awarded a five-year, \$5 million grant by the US Department of Health and Human Services Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program (HHS) to assess the impact of the program on youth sexual and reproductive health outcomes.

This federal funding for the city's CHAT Program evaluation was suddenly and unexpectedly cut by HHS in July 2017, depriving CDPH of crucial data sources to be able to evaluate the program. While CDPH committed to continuing their important work, they also joined Healthy Futures of Texas, represented by the Public Citizen, a nonprofit consumer advocacy organization, in a class-action lawsuit against the federal government to try to preserve and restore the five-year grants. As a result of a positive decision by the U.S. District Court, all grantees in the class action suit were allowed to file a continuation application for year four of the grant and restored the conditions of the five-year grant as originally awarded.

"We know that comprehensive, medically accurate and age-appropriate sexual health education alongside access to health care improves the health of our young people," Dr. Morita continued. "By ensuring everyone has access to information and resources we can close the remaining disparities and help every teen grow into a healthy adult."

For the latest teen birth rate data visit www.chicagohealthatlas.org. To see other data on maternal, child and adolescent key indicators and reports, please visit [the Healthy Chicago Babies website](#).